

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Presented) A method for polishing a wafer comprising the steps of:
holding a wafer on a rotatable wafer holding plate;
providing a rotatable table;
adhering a polishing cloth to said rotatable table;

5 supplying a polishing agent containing an alkaline solution to said polishing cloth, said alkaline solution containing an organic base or a salt thereof and silica having essentially spherical particles;

polishing a surface of said wafer with said polishing cloth by placing said polishing cloth with said polishing agent in contact with said surface of said wafer;

10 controlling pH of said polishing agent in a pH value range level from 10 to 13, wherein Na_2CO_3 is used for pH adjustment of said alkaline solution.

2. (Previously Presented) A method for polishing a wafer comprising the steps of:
holding a wafer on a rotatable wafer holding plate; and

polishing a surface of the wafer being in contact with a polishing cloth adhered on a rotatable table in such a state that a polishing agent is supplied onto the polishing cloth, wherein
5 the polishing agent is an alkaline solution which contains silica, said silica being essentially uniformly dispersed in said alkaline solution, the silica having particles each essentially in the shape of a sphere and an average particle diameter of 5 to 10 nm.

3. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 2, wherein the polishing agent is an alkaline solution which contains a concentration of silica in a range of 2 to 20 wt % and further an organic base or a salt thereof.

4. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the organic base or the salt thereof is a quaternary ammonium hydroxide.

5 - 8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 4, wherein the quaternary ammonium hydroxide is tetramethyl ammonium hydroxide.

10. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein amount of the organic base or the salt thereof does not exceed a ~~predetermined~~ dissolution limit of the polishing agent in use.

11. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the wafer is a silicon wafer.

12. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, further comprising polishing said surface of said wafer ~~with a rough polishing step (a primary~~

~~polishing step and a secondary polishing step~~) in a mirror polishing process, said mirror polishing process including a primary polishing step and a secondary polishing step.

13. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 12, wherein ~~the rough polishing step is the secondary~~ polishing step is a rough polishing step.

14. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the silica is used at a concentration in the range of from 2 to 20 wt %.

15. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the polishing cloth is of an unwoven cloth type.

16. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein Asker C hardness (~~Asker C hardness~~) of the polishing cloth is 50 or more.

17. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein stock removal of the wafer is 1 μm or more.

18. (Currently Amended) A method for polishing a wafer comprising the steps of:
holding a wafer on a rotatable wafer holding plate;
providing a rotatable table;

connecting a polishing cloth to said rotatable table;

5 supplying a polishing agent containing an alkaline solution to said polishing cloth, said alkaline solution containing an organic base or a salt thereof and silica having essentially spherical particles, said organic base being a quaternary ammonium hydroxide;

providing a means for holding said polishing agent;

polishing a surface of said wafer with said polishing cloth by placing said polishing cloth
10 in contact with said surface of said wafer;

collecting excess polishing agent after polishing said wafer with said polishing agent;

supplying said excess polishing agent to said means for holding said polishing agent, said excess polishing agent mixing with existing polishing agent contained in said holding means to form a polishing agent mixture;

15 adjusting pH level of said polishing agent mixture in a pH value range from 10 to 13, wherein Na_2CO_3 is used for pH adjustment of said alkaline solution; and

supplying said polishing agent mixture to said polishing cloth.

19. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18, wherein the silica is used at a concentration in the range of from 5 to 80 wt % of silica.

20. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18, wherein the polishing cloth is of an unwoven cloth type.

21. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim [[18]] 20, wherein the silica is used at a concentration in the range of from 5 to 80 wt % of silica.

22. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18, wherein hardness (Asker C hardness) of the polishing cloth is 50 or more.

23. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18, wherein amount of the organic base or the salt thereof does not exceed a ~~predetermined~~ dissolution limit of the polishing agent in use.

24. (Canceled)